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should be written by a friend and admirer. The critically prepared biography has its purpose, and its place in historical literature, but that purpose differs greatly from that of the loving friend who chronicles the triumphs and influence of a great man.

Mr. McCarthy, in writing what has plainly been a joyous task, has given to the world a book which for style and matter will equal the best of his other books, and will profit and fascinate all its readers.

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ZUR FRAGE NACH DEM URSPRUNG DES GNOSTIZISMUS. Von WILHELM ANZ, Licentiat der Theologie (= Bd. XV, Heft. 4, of *Texte und Untersuchungen*. Edited by O. von Gebhardt and A. Harnack). Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1897. Pp. 112. M. 3.50.

THIS essay sets itself to establish two things: first, that the central, the fundamental doctrine of early gnosticism was the ascent of the soul from this world through seven planetary heavens ruled by hostile archons, till it reached an eighth heaven where God dwells; and, second, that this early gnosticism sprang from the religion of Babylon under a certain side influence from Persia. Most critics are now agreed that oriental elements were prominent in the beginnings of gnosticism, and that its tendency was practical rather than speculative. Kessler, in his book on *Gnosis und altbabyl. Religion* (1882), concluded that gnosticism had its origin in the old Babylonian religion; and Brandt, in his *Mandäische Religion* (1889), pointed out the resemblance between the doctrines of the "Christians of St. John" and early gnosticism. Anz follows the same line of inquiry, with special reference to the central doctrine of gnosticism, which he finds in the later Babylonian belief, and in a special manifestation of it which took the form of free will and knowledge in reaction against the fatalism of astrology. Knowledge was the way of salvation by which man pressed through the seven hostile planetary heavens to the world of light, happiness, and God. The moral living built on knowledge, whether of an ascetic or an epicurean type, started from the point of view that man thereby gains deliverance from the fatalistic rulers of the world, and makes himself worthy and certain of divine help in the ascent of the soul. Such a religion of deliverance, with its pessimistic view of life and its longing after higher existence, met with a ready response in the

ancient world, though as it spread upon Hellenic-Christian soil it necessarily lost its original character. The power of the stars was thrust aside by the problems of mind and matter, law and grace. The seven world-powers melted into one demiurge; and the way of life through mysteries was succeeded by the self-deliverance of the sage. Anz finds the central doctrine especially reproduced in the Ophites, the earliest Christian gnostics; for they were not inclined toward Greek speculation, and were anti-Jewish. Here it ran its natural course of "mysteriosophy," till it ended in the absurdities of "Pistis-Sophia," and the first and second books of "Jeu," which were never intended to be put in practice. He finds, though less clearly, the same doctrine in the schools of Valentine and other gnostics.

Much interesting material is collected to show that the Babylonian religion existed when gnosticism appeared; that it alone gave the peculiar doctrine of planet powers alluded to; that magic, so presupposed in this system, had its home in Chaldea, and that the only two systems outside Christian gnosticism which show the doctrine of "the ascent of the soul through the seven planetary kingdoms" are those of the Mandean religion and the Mithras mysteries, both of which were under Babylonian influences. The tower of Babel, with its seven towers, one above another, and a temple tower above all, was really the symbol and model of early gnosticism. It is "a metaphysical reproduction of the tower of Babel." How this central doctrine arose in Babylon Anz can answer only hypothetically; but that it was the central doctrine, and that it arose in Babylon, he thinks he has proved.

This is an interesting, carefully written, scholarly essay; and really opens the way for fresh inquiry into a very complicated question. The author makes his contention very probable; we hardly feel that he has put it beyond question. The fact that Celsus, who is our authority for the "central doctrine" in Mithras worship, refers it to Greek and Persian sources; the impossibility of tracing any historic connection between the Ophites and Babylonia; the silence of early writers on gnosticism respecting the "ascent of the soul" as a cardinal doctrine of this system, with the further fact that it is the latest forms of gnosticism which present the eschatological mysteries of soul-ascent; finally, the mixture of Jewish thought about "seven heavens" and similar ideas in the earliest Ophite gnosticism—all lead us to hesitate in receiving a theory, based so largely on mere similarity of views on one point, in such a vast collection of thoughts as are comprehended under gnosticism.